

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Assistive Technology (AT) Committee Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2021

Members Present

Bea Shapiro, Chair
Nathan Pullen
Sue LeHew
Bob Kresmer
Mark Nelson

Members Absent

Terri Hedgpeth

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Call to Order and Introductions

Bea Shapiro, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of November 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Bob Kresmer motioned to approve the November 4, 2020 meeting minutes. Sue LeHew seconded the motion. The motion to approve of the minutes was passed by unanimous voice vote.

TVI Training Discussion

Bea Shapiro stated the committee had previously discussed offering a training to Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) and staff and inquired whether committee members still wished to pursue that. Bob Kresmer stated that most teachers were teaching remotely and inquired whether the committee would like to offer a remote training to teachers and staff. Bea Shapiro stated the committee had initially intended to offer the training in the spring and inquired whether that would be appropriate. Sue LeHew stated that if the committee still intended to offer an all-day workshop, the committee could break up the training into 1-hour sessions and offered 2 beginner courses, 2 intermediate courses and 2 advanced courses. Sue LeHew stated the committee could offer 1 hour of training on AT BVI

overview and 1 hour of screen readers for the beginner courses. She stated the committee could also offer 1 hour of training on the transition from screen magnification to screen reading and refreshable Braille for intermediate courses. Bob Kresmer inquired whether teachers were experiencing difficulties using the different platforms on different devices. Mark Nelson stated that teachers were likely experiencing difficulties using different platforms in addition to using them remotely. Mr. Nelson stated he performed a demonstration on using low vision AT to teach a different topic, such as Braille. Sue LeHew stated that Zoom would support the use of 2 cameras, which would allow the host to turn the second camera on and off. Mark Nelson stated the issue with using an AT camera to teach Braille was that the raised dots and depressed dots were visible to a sighted teacher. Mr. Nelson stated the camera should be positioned so the shadow would fall on different directions on the raised and depressed dots.

Bea Shapiro inquired whether the committee would like to provide training on topics related to remote teaching. Mark Nelson stated that remote learning would likely remain to some extent, especially in rural areas. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the committee should address the transition from students using notetakers to other devices. Mark Nelson stated that students should generally transition from using notetakers to computers between sixth and eighth grade, although earlier was better. Bob Kresmer inquired whether teachers would be interested in that discussion. Mark Nelson stated that teachers might be interested in a discussion on that topic. Mark Nelson stated that some individuals considered a tablet to be a computer as it allowed a student to access the necessary programs. Bea Shapiro stated the committee could invite individuals to speak about the different aspects of teaching remotely as well. Mark Nelson agreed and stated that Tressi Smith at the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) might have information regarding remote instruction as well. Bob Kresmer stated he would contact ASDB and inquire.

Sue LeHew summarized the topics the committee had discussed: using AT to teach Braille, tips for virtually teaching AT TVI, matching tools to the task (notetakers vs. Chromebooks), moving from a notetaker to a computer, and pros and cons of devices. Bob Kresmer stated the survey that committee members received from teachers was vague regarding the topics of interest. Mr. Kresmer stated that teachers' areas of interest had likely changed due to the pandemic. Bob Kresmer stated ASDB was offering virtual training to teachers on using different technologies, and he could inquire whether there were specific areas of interest. Bea Shapiro stated the committee could provide 2-3 hours on different topics. Mark Nelson stated that teachers would likely attend shorter trainings of 1-2 hours rather than an all-day training. Bea Shapiro stated the committee could offer a 2-hour training in

one virtual room with presentations and interaction from attendees. Mark Nelson stated that if the committee wanted to use break out rooms, the host would have to assign individuals to the breakout rooms. Sue LeHew stated the newer version of Zoom would allow the user to choose a breakout room, although it was difficult to move an ASL interpreter or CART provider to another room seamlessly. Ms. LeHew inquired whether the committee should provide a new training each week or month. Bea Shapiro stated the committee could provide 1 day of training to make it easier for teachers to attend. Bea Shapiro stated the committee could find out more information regarding potential training topics and discuss those at the next committee meeting.

AT Trends

Mark Nelson stated that Amazon allowed users to text, which would allow non-verbal individuals to communicate. Bob Kresmer led a round of discussion regarding the role of GCBVI in recommending training and best practices for approving technology.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Assistive Technology Committee was scheduled for February 17, 2021. Agenda items are as follows:

- TVI Training Discussion
- AT Trends

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

A call to the public was made with no response's forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

Bob Kresmer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mark Nelson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.